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# A Passing Fantasy Issue 158

## NFLBP Player Newsletter 2006 Week Two

ed Robert Crowther

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Thanks to Darren and Peter for their contributions this time, a bumper crop of season previews. The address for contributions is:

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<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/gameplan>

### **WEEK ONE REVIEW**

#### **Darren Birtchnell**

The defending champions immediately showed they'll miss their coach by slipping up in Cleveland. Turnovers were the difference as the Browns forced four, including returning a pick 69 yds for TD. The Dolphins dominated statistically in Tennessee but struggled to put the Titans away, which might not bode well for their season. Tennessee did well to stay in the game, so maybe they won't be quite so bad this season. We'll see... Oakland made light work of their personnel problems and had too much for the Jets. The Raiders passing game was in good form and they never looked in danger of being upset. Buffalo almost continued their winning run into when it really counts, but the Chiefs were just too good for them in the end. The teams were tied at 17 after three quarters, but KC scored another TD while the Bills could only find the endzone on a safety by their defense. The signs are encouraging for Buffalo though. Cincinnati erased the memories of last year's defeat to Denver by putting in a great offensive performance to see off the Broncos. The first half was cagey but the Bengals passing game exploded in the second half and they finished with 6 passing TD's. Bengal's fans will be hoping they haven't peaked too soon. The Ravens slipped to another opening day defeat, this time at the hands of Seattle. The Seahawks pounded the ball at only 2.4 yds a carry but Baltimore just couldn't get their offense going.

They returned a pick for a TD but didn't find the endzone again until it was too late.

The closest game on opening day took place in Detroit, where the visiting Eagles won out in overtime. The Lions, as usual, pounded the ball on the ground whilst Philly had a more balanced attack. The Eagles also got a kick return TD, which effectively won them the game. Chicago surprised the pundits by beating the Redskins. Washington led 14-0 after the first period but the Bears clawed their way back into the game before edging it thanks to 10 points in the 4th quarter. St Louis' much-vaunted passing game was held in check by the Giants for the most part, but that only served to open up space for the Rams ground game and they were able to take advantage. The Giants took too long to get going on offense themselves and the game was over by halftime. Carolina had no problems with Dallas, scoring consistently throughout the game to record an easy win. The Cowboys showed a brief spark in the 2nd quarter, but it only ended up as consolation points. The Saints were comfortable winners over Tampa in the battle of the coachless teams, thanks to a consistent ground game. The Buccs look to be struggling since losing their co-coaches, it could be a long season in Florida. The biggest shock of the day came in San Francisco, as the Niners had little trouble in seeing off the Packers. The Niners only completed 10 of 24 passes but they made them count, while Green Bay didn't trouble the scorers until the 3rd quarter, by which time it was too late as they were already trailing by 20. San Fran were a playoff team two seasons ago, maybe this win will catapult them on to bigger things.

### **PERFORMANCES OF THE WEEK**

Offensive performance of the week has to go to the Bengals – though we may find out more about whether it was great offense or terrible defense this week. Defensive performance of the week goes to San Francisco for their surprisingly good showing against the Pack. Special teams performance of the week goes to the Eagles, for whom a kick return TD was the

difference between them winning and my prediction.

### **RAVENOUS (The view from Baltimore)**

**Peter Kneil**

Not quite the start I was looking for with a two point defeat to Seattle. I was expecting my defence to be the weak link this season but on this showing it will be my offence. My first and second near offence wasn't called once the whole game and we only managed one trip into Seattle's 20. My center has been ordered to the weight room to try and build up some more muscle this week so hopefully that'll improve things. Luckily I've only got the Titans next time. I say 'only' but I was the only team to lose to them in their last 40 odd games! A big win is needed to restore some confidence.

In the other games there were big wins for the Raiders, Bengals, Rams and Panthers. The only real shock was Green Bay losing to the 49ers. (It obviously went to Goz's head beating me last week). I think this performance clinches the team of the week award for the 49ers.

### **PREDICTIONS COMPETITION**

**Darren Birtchnell**

As I mentioned last week I'll be running the predictions competition in exactly the same way as last year. Just in case you've forgotten, here's how it will work.

The competition will be based purely on guessing the winning margin for each game, with bonus points available for getting the margin correct or being within a few points of the correct margin, as follows:

- Predict the winning team - 2 points
- Predict the correct winning margin - 10 bonus points
- Within 1 point of the winning margin - 5 bonus points
- Within 2 points - 4 bonus points
- Within 3 points - 3 bonus points
- Within 4 points - 2 bonus points
- Within 5 points - 1 bonus point

We're also looking for turn credits to be contributed to a prize fund, as we did last year. Myself, Peter and Martyn are willing to donate some, so if anyone else is feeling generous

please let me know.

And don't forget, you need to predict at least 8 weeks worth of games to qualify for the prizes...

Here are the scores from last week (yes, they are genuine!)

Darren Birtchnell	29
Peter Kneil	19
Rob Crowther	18

### **WEEK TWO PREVIEW**

Jets at Patriots – Both teams are looking to get over poor starts to the season, I think the defending champs will be too strong here. PATRIOTS BY 7

Bills at Dolphins – Last week Miami narrowly won a game they should have won comfortably, while Buffalo narrowly missed out on an upset. Miami at home should be too good for the Bills, but we'll find out how much last weeks results were harbingers of change in the AFC East. DOLPHINS BY 7

Browns at Bengals – A big win for Cleveland last week, which indicates they may be ready to challenge for the division title once again – this is the game where we'll find out. Cincy took out last season's frustrations on Denver in week one, but this will be more of a challenge. BENGALS BY 7

Titans at Ravens – Baltimore are keen to bounce back quickly and assert their playoff credentials, Tennessee might be good enough to win a game this year going by last week. RAVENS BY 10

Seahawks at Chiefs – After their great playoff run last season KC nearly slipped up last week, that should have brought them down to earth and have them focussed on beating Seattle. CHIEFS BY 14

Broncos at Raiders – Can Oakland put as many points on Denver as the Bengals managed? It's not what we're aiming for – a win would be more than enough.

Giants at Eagles – Philly didn't look to great last week, but they still looked better than New York. EAGLES BY 10

Cowboys at Redskins – Dallas are almost certainly the worst team in the NFC, Washington aren't very good but should be able to see off the Cowboys. REDSKINS BY 14

Lions at Bucs – Both teams need a win to kick start their season, I predict a second heart breaking defeat for Detroit. BUCS BY 3

Bears at Packers – Both teams were part of surprise results last week, Green Bay will be hoping to prove that was a blip and not the start of a trend.. PACKERS BY 14

49ers at Panthers – San Francisco had a great result last week, but if they're going to get anywhere they still have to beat the Rams and Carolina before anyone starts taking them seriously. PANTHERS BY 10

Saints at Rams – A good win for New Orleans last week but I suspect St Louis will be after some revenge after last year's defeats. RAMS BY 21

### WEEK ONE PREDICTIONS

Darren Birtchnell - Patriots by 6, Dolphins by 7, Bengals by 4, Ravens by 10, Chiefs by 6,, Raiders by 13, Eagles by 7, Redskins by 10, Buccs by 3, Packers by 10, Panthers by 13, Rams by 17

Peter Kneil - Pats by 7, Dolphins by 7, Bengals by 17, Ravens by 14, Chiefs by 7, Raiders by 17, Eagles by 10, Redskins by 10, Lions by 3, Packers by 7, Panthers by 14, Rams by 21